

# **Abeism Al Chet from the Jewish Covid Resilience Network**

**For the sin that we have sinned before our G!d and our disabled brethren by...**

Not believing you about your own experiences, delegitimizing your wisdom and your knowing

Making decisions without including you, or including you only as window dressing

Responding to acute illness with meal trains and hospital visits, but disappearing when illness becomes chronic

Thinking of you as "taking more than you give," while disregarding and denying the gifts that you long to offer

Pitying you and treating you like a burden, while demanding constant gratitude

Infantilizing you and desexualizing you

Making you feel that there is something "wrong" with your beautiful bodies that were made in the image of the divine

**וְעַל כָּלֵם אֲלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ מִחַל לָנוּ כִּפָּר לָנוּ.**

Exiling you from our communities by removing covid protections and mask mandates

Valuing abled comfort and convenience over your lives

Focusing only on the risks of acute Covid, while ignoring reams of scientific data on long-term impacts

Refusing to "follow the science" because it has grown wearisome and inconvenient

Dismissing concern about a deadly, disabling virus as "living in fear"

Rejecting friends and community members for covid safety needs, without unpacking why those needs make us so uncomfortable

Giving in to loud opinions and majority desires, at the expense of those who are systemically marginalized

Allowing trauma-based denial to drive our Covid policy

Abdicating our responsibility to confront the true existential crises of the pandemic

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Refusing to see your skills and denying you meaningful work

Not hiring you, but then making you work for free to create your own access

Requiring so much energy and hand-holding from you to address our ableism, that you do not have capacity left for your own spiritual pursuits

Blocking you from positions of leadership, and making the rabbinate inaccessible

Failing to lift up disabled ancestors, like Moshe, and disabled spiritual teachings

Not appreciating all the ways that you contribute, including by your being

Invoking "*lashon hara*" to silence you when you speak out about harm and abuse

Making you feel that you must be extraordinary to justify your existence

Saying that welcoming you is too expensive, rather than budgeting for accessibility from the beginning

Cutting your access resources first when the lean times come

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Promoting false binaries between gathering in-person and gathering safely

Making the excuse that "We have a covid policy," but not requiring careful layers of protection to create meaningful safety

Dropping masking because of "community mental health" while ignoring the mental health of disabled people forced out of unsafe communities

Pitting one set of disabled needs against another as an excuse to remove masking, rather than doing power analysis and seeking disabled expertise on access conflicts

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Failing to include ableism in our teachings on diversity

Spouting words like "inclusivity" and "acceptance" without understanding the meaning behind the words

Not providing ramps, elevators, fragrance-free soap, earplugs, large print, braille, amplification, stim toys, masks, quiet rooms, and accessible foods

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Not having fragrance-free policies

Not pushing our leaders to develop Covid tests accessible to blind folks

Not protesting against a society that locks up Mad and neurodivergent folks

Doubly abandoning multiply marginalized disabled people, eg. by perpetuating pay-to-play Judaism and by hiring security guards who threaten BIPOC folks

Talking over people with speech disabilities, dehumanizing nonverbal folks, and centering only one mode of communication

Saying that we care while making decisions that actively marginalize you

Complaining about the “difficulty” of welcoming you and keeping you safe, rather than considering how horrific it is to be forced out of one's own community

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Abandoning the mitzvah of *pikuach nefesh* in this ongoing pandemic

Teaching high-risk children, and children in high-risk families, that their Jewish community does not value them or their survival

Perpetuating the capitalist white supremacist idea that disabled people are not worth supporting or saving

Failing to show moral leadership in the face of popular callousness and ableist government policies

Hiding behind institutions to evade moral accountability

Repeating the eugenicist words of government leaders without examination, despite repeating “Never Again”

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Ignoring the hypocrisy of doing “self-examination” during High Holiday super-spreader gatherings held in a Covid surge

Failing honor the obligation that is “*Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh BaZeh*” — we are all responsible for each other

Neglecting the mitzvah of loving our neighbors as ourselves

## **Abeism AI Chet from the Jewish Covid Resilience Network**

Overlooking *mitzvot bein adam l'chaveiro* to focus on our individual ritual fulfillment

Alienating you from Judaism

Closing our ears to your voices as you beg for our solidarity

Abandoning you when you need us most

Being more willing to say goodbye than to accept accountability

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**And for all of these, G!d of Forgiveness, pardon us, forgive us, atone for us**

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**But only after we have done so for ourselves.**